# The Examined Life

## Examining… Gender

Supplementary Quotes

"...gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect and consequence of the imitation itself...what they imitate is a phantasmic ideal of heterosexual identity...gay identities work neither to copy nor emulate heterosexuality, but rather, to expose heterosexuality as an incessant and panicked imitation of its own naturalized idealization. That heterosexuality is always in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk, that it, that it 'knows' it's own possibility of becoming undone"

— Judith Butler

"If Lacan presumes that female homosexuality issues from a disappointed heterosexuality, as observation is said to show, could it not be equally clear to the observer that heterosexuality issues from a disappointed homosexuality?"

— Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

"All oppression creates a state of war. And this is no exception."

— Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

"The category of Other is as original as consciousness itself. The duality between Self and Other can be found in the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies; the division did not always fall into the category of the division of the sexes (...) No group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself. It only takes three travelers brought together by chance in the same train compartment for the rest of the travellers to become vaguely hostile 'others'. Village people view anyone not belonging to the village as suspicious 'others'. For the native of a country, inhabitants of other countries are viewed as 'foreigners'; Jews are the 'others' for anti-Semites, blacks for racist Americans, indigenous people for colonists, proletarians for the propertied classes."

— Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

"Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison."

— Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

"My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their *fascinating* graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists - I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt."

— Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

“Patriarchy, reformed or unreformed, is patriarchy still: its worst abuses purged or foresworn, it might actually be more stable and secure than before.”

— Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*

“Lady," we always call each other, partly a joke, partly in earnest, using still the old word, in its full flavor a kind of exorcism against "saleslady," "old lady," "ladylike." Relishing the anachronism, even the formality a type of aphrodisiac, a contrast to our delight in the horny, the vulgar, the vernacular which we cultivate just as ardently.”

— Kate Millett, *Sita*

“Once I accepted my own transexuality, then it became obvious to me that the question "Why do transsexuals exist?" is not a matter of pure curiosity, but rather an act of nonacceptance, as it invariably occurs in the absence of asking the reciprocal question: "Why do cissexuals exist?" The unceasing search to uncover the cause of transexuality is designed to keep transsexual gender identities in a perpetually questionable state, thereby ensuring that cissexual gender identities continue to be unquestionable.”

— Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*

“As a feminist, I consider the female pronoun to be an honorific, a term that conveys respect. Respect is due to women as members of a sex caste that have survived subordination and deserve to be addressed with honour. Men who transgender cannot occupy such a position.”

— Sheila Jeffreys, *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism*

“Radical feminist theorists do not seek to make gender a bit more flexible, but to eliminate it. They are gender abolitionists, and understand gender to provide the framework and rationale for male dominance. In the radical feminist approach, masculinity is the behaviour of the male ruling class and femininity is the behaviour of the subordinate class of women. Thus gender can have no place in the egalitarian future that feminism aims to create.”

— Sheila Jeffreys, *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism*

“Instead of saying that all gender is this or all gender is that, let's recognize that the word gender has scores of meaning built into it. It's an amalgamation of bodies, identities, and life experiences, subconscious urges, sensations, and behaviors, some of which develop organically, and others which are shaped by language and culture. Instead of saying that gender is any one single thing, let's start describing it as a holistic experience.”

— Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation*